

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Samantha Fonseca. I am undocumented, a student from Hartford, and nineteen years old. I'm also a member of CT Students for a Dream.

I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am from Brazil and have lived in Connecticut for almost four years. Back in my country, I lived with my mother and my siblings. My mother raised my siblings and myself all on her own. She worked her entire life in difficult jobs to raise kids, and we came to America in search of a better life and to prosper. We didn't speak any English when we arrived. I graduated from Bulkeley High School and am currently enrolled at the University of Connecticut.

My family does not have access to healthcare insurance. It's a huge battle for us because my mom has a serious dental disease. She is just 43 years old, and she is losing all of her teeth since we don't have insurance to cover it, and we also don't have the money to cover it. It's quite difficult for me to see my mother in this situation. It's difficult for me to see my mother working so hard in this country and knowing that I won't be able to help her with her teeth and other problems. I fractured my bones twice when I was younger and never went to physical therapy. Now that I am older, all the symptoms are arriving. I can't do hard labor because my arms hurt so much, and I need to go to the doctor, but I don't because it is too expensive. We don't go to the hospital when we're unwell because it's too expensive. Having access to health care will allow me to focus on my studies rather than worrying about my mother's health. My life will undergo significant transformations, such as physical and mental as well.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Samantha Fonseca